



# ***Meal, Ready-to-Eat, Individual (MRE)***

## ***What It Is:***

In the modern battlefield, warfighters often move on short notice — and can face extremely intense combat. In these situations, nutritional intake can have a great impact on a soldier's performance. The Meal, Ready-to-Eat, Individual (MRE) is the standard military ration developed to support the individual soldier in all the Armed Forces (Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines).

## ***Why It's Needed:***

The MRE replaced the C Ration in the early 1980s — and since then, it has been continuously updated. However, feedback from Operation Desert Shield/Storm suggested that soldiers would consume more if their preferences were taken into consideration; so recent improvements have focused on replacing items to make the rations more acceptable and to expand variety.

## ***How It Works:***

Key features include:

- The MRE must maintain high quality for three years at 80° F and for six months at 100° F.
- The ration must be highly acceptable to soldiers.
- The MRE must meet the Office of the Surgeon General's nutritional requirements.
- The packaging must meet stringent durability requirements — including resistance to airdrop, rough handling and temperature extremes.

Since the MRE XIII of 1993, 95 new items (70% of which were non-developmental items) have been approved. 18 of the least acceptable items have been replaced and 4 vegetarian mealshave been introduced. The number of menus increased — incrementally — from 12 to 24.

## ***Benefits:***

**Soldier Acceptance...**In tests in the field, soldiers are giving the MRE high approval ratings—and the more acceptable an item, the greater the likelihood it will be consumed.

**Greater Variety...**Changes in the menu help reduce monotony, meet varying consumer tastes, and keep pace with the latest advances in nutrition, packaging, and food processing.

## ***Point of Contact:***

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